

Everyone's friend, Petey Childers, dies

By Frank Haight Jr.
The Examiner

Independence has lost a true friend — Petey Childers, a fixture in the Independence community for more than 50 years. Childers, who once said he was "everybody's friend," died of an aneurism Wednesday night at the Columbia Independence Regional Health Center at age 84.

He is survived by two daughters, Mary Childers of Independence and Sue Childers of Ashfield, Mass. His wife, Drusilla Henning Childers, died in 1994. Services will be at 10 a.m., Monday, at the George C. Carson & Sons Funeral Home, Winner Road and Fuller Street. The family will receive friends from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday at the chapel. Burial will be in Woodlawn Cemetery. Mary Childers said her father

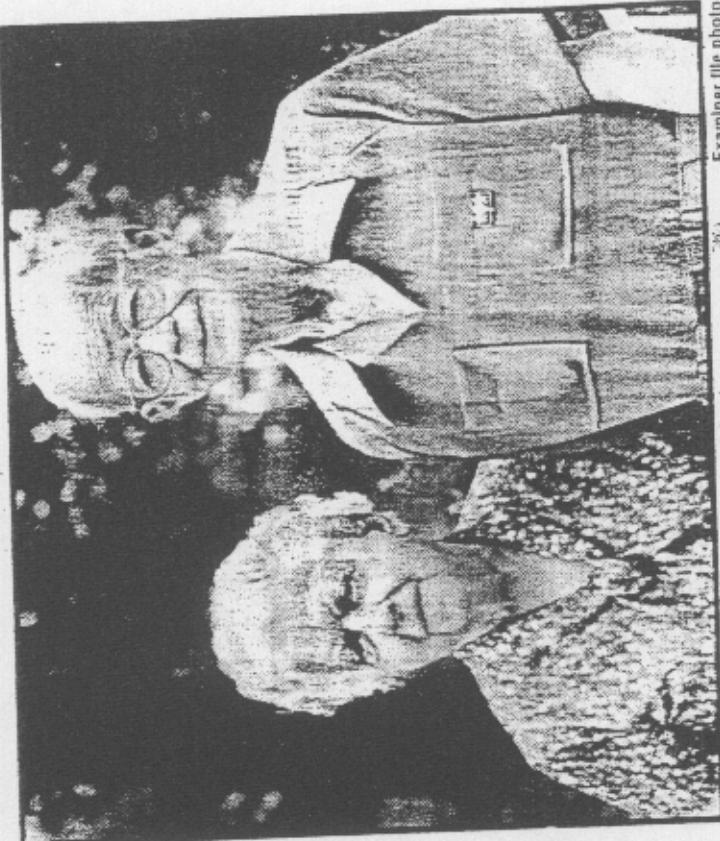
loved Independence and the people loved him.

"He was always doing things to help them," she said.

"I would like to inscribe on his tombstone, 'A Friend to Independence,'" Mary Childers said, "because he had so many friends." Mary Childers said her father, who was an Independence pharmacist from 1933 until he retired in 1991, said it was a pleasure to serve the community.

"During the Depression, he always saw that the people got what they wanted regardless of their financial status," she said. Nobody had money, but if he could do something to help them, he would.

Because there were no all-night drug stores in Independence during the 1950s and '60s, people would call his home and ask him to fill a prescription.



Pete and Drusilla Childers. In a photo taken in the late 1980s. His wife died in 1994.

store where he would fill the prescription and we would deliver it," she said, recalling that at one stop a man came out to the car and "kissed my hand because he was so grateful."

But Petey Childers' generosity didn't stop there, his daughter

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And "Papa never turned them down," she said.

Mary Childers recalled the many times as a high school student that she helped her father deliver prescriptions at all hours of the night — regardless of the weather.

We would get up and go to the

How do you remember
Petey Childers?

If you would like to share your recollections of Petey, call The Examiner at 254-8600 and ask for Frank Haight at extension 117. We will publish a story Saturday compiling anecdotes about and tributes to this longtime community leader.

ble handful of o'dogbane."

In 1966, Childers and his wife purchased the Queen Anne-style Houghes-Green mansion on North Main Street.

"The home is in my name and my sister's name," Mary Childers said. "We don't have any immediate plans for the house... I don't know what the future will bring."

Childers: Longtime pharmacist dies

same table and visiting," Mary Childers said. "He invited them to come to our cabin the next day and they did."

Another attribute of Petey Childers, who moved to Independence when he was a year old, was caring about other people.

"He was always speaking to strangers," his daughter said, and when asked why, he always replied: "It costs nothing to be friendly."

While caught in a nearly empty restaurant last summer in Colorado with his friend, Dr. Ed Holton of Independence, Petey Childers provided free copies of The Examiner to patients at the Independence Sanitarium and Hospital (Columbian Hospital) for as long as his daughter can remember.

"He knew the people who were

ep up with the news in their

hometown, so he gave free papers to the hospital."

Mary Childers described her father as a man who was generous, friendly and kind, but his greatest attribute was that he cared about other people.

"He was always speaking to strangers," his daughter said, and when asked why, he always replied: "It costs nothing to be friendly."

At the age of 13, Petey Childers got his first taste of work as a fountain boy at the Crown Drug Store on Independence Square.

In 1933, he became a pharmacist and opened a drug store with his brother, Buddy, in the old First National Bank building on the Square.

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"He would do things like cash pension checks for senior citizens and deliver grocery items to his customers," Mary Childers recalled. "He knew all of his customers and their families and he cared for them."

Because of this compassion for the sick, Petey Childers provided free copies of The Examiner to patients at the Independence Sanitarium and Hospital (Columbian Hospital) for as long as his daughter can remember.

"He knew the people who were sick and wanted them to be able to keep up with the news in their